

Still Life in Pieces: A New Play

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

The act of writing a play is different for every writer. All writers learn something from every new play they write. I wrote a play in order to build on what I have learned so far as a writer, and to gain more insight into how I write. As plays are constantly evolving, I plan on working on this play after I've graduated and taking the insight I've made of my writing style and abilities with me. A brief synopsis of the play is as follows: When Addison's adoptive parents get a divorce, she attempts to seek solace in her birth mother, but what follows causes Addison and those around her to face the choices they've made and what could have been.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jennifer Blackmer, who is not only a tremendous mentor and professor, but also a brilliant artist and human being.

Process Analysis

As a student of the Ball State Department of Theatre and Dance, I've tried my hand at a variety of concentrations, but I found my niche in playwriting. I've always considered myself to be somewhat of a storyteller. That's what drew me to theatre in the first place. I wanted to write a play for my thesis to gain more of an insight into how I work as a writer. Whether the play is good or not, I feel that I still gained insight into how I work as a writer. This is information I can take with me as I go out and try to tell more stories. The process of writing a play can be amorphous and difficult to describe. Nevertheless, I will attempt to walk through the process of writing my thesis play, paying particularly close attention to the patterns I see in how I write.

The Idea

In my experience, inspiration can come from a variety of different sources in a variety of ways. Sometimes, I think a particular person or situation would be an interesting subject, or sometimes it's as simple as asking "what if?" In this case of my thesis play, I came up with a theme before anything else. I was inspired to write this play while I was in a theatre design class last semester. The assignment we were working on was a collage. It wasn't my particular collage that I found intriguing, but rather the idea of a collage itself. I thought the idea that completely different objects can be crammed together and create something completely new and completely beautiful would make for a great play.

The title came next. I find that I like coming up with titles before writing. It seems easier to me to write around a title than to try and assign a title to a large piece of work like a play. If I

ever feel lost while writing, I can turn to the title and remind myself what I set out to write in the first place. The title *Still Life in Pieces* just appeared in my head and never left. I thought it was a clever nod to the collage motif and could also serve to hint at a character's inner turmoil.

I had a theme and a title, but no idea about plot, setting, or characters. This was a new phenomenon for me. If I had had a character, or a place, or a story in mind, I could've started writing. Since I had a theme and nothing concrete, though, it felt as if I was trying to build bricks out of air. When I'm in the early stages of writing, I don't necessarily like trying to force ideas. I usually let ideas come naturally.

I can't remember exactly when I thought of the adoption storyline or what it was that inspired it, but it all just clicked after that. I thought that the choice to make the main character an adopted child would tie in perfectly to the theme I had established. From there, the ideas formed more naturally. I was able to think about who would be a part of this child's life, what events might occur, and what catalysts might motivate these events to happen.

The Execution

The playwriting process is different for every playwright. Some prefer to outline their work before writing. Some like to just write and see what sticks. I've written plays using both methods, and I've found that different plays call for different methods. If I were to write a play that was heavy on plot, like a farce, then I would write an outline to keep track of what is going on, entrances and exits, . In a character-driven play, such as *Still Life in Pieces*, I find that I'm much more successful just writing. I put two characters in a room together and give them something to talk about. Even if this does not make it into the final script, I am still able to get a feeling for who these characters are and what drives them. In *Still Life in Pieces*, I started with Addison, a teenager who feels resentment

toward her adoptive parents, who are in the process of getting a divorce. I wanted Claire, Addison's adoptive mother, to be struggling to try and keep things together for Addison when

"Just writing" is probably the hardest part for me as writer. If you asked a group of writers how to be a better writer, they would tell you to write every day. As I try to write more plays, and in the process of writing *Still Life in Pieces*, I find that to be painfully true. There were periods when I didn't write anything for a very long time. I got caught up in school and other aspects of my life, and put the play out of my mind. When I came back to it, it felt like I was starting over. I had to reacquaint myself with the characters, how they spoke, and how they reacted to the events of the play.

I find that, as a writer, I thrive on deadlines. Something that made this thesis play particularly difficult was that it sometimes felt like there was so much time left to finish it. This meant that there were times when I struggled to really buckle down and focus on it. I sincerely believe I would've benefited from stricter adherence to more frequent deadlines. This is a technique I think I will definitely try to get in the habit of after school. Keeping a regular schedule is difficult when you have school or work, but it's that discipline that makes for a better writer.

Overall, I think that the script included in this thesis is a good foundation for an interesting play. My adviser, Jennifer Blackmer, will tell you that a play is never truly finished until it's performed, and I believe I've only scratched the surface on this play. This draft is likely the beginning of a long writing process, but I feel that I've gained insight into my writing process that I feel I hadn't gauged before. It isn't often that I write about my own writing, but I feel that this self-reflection has allowed me the opportunity to take a step back and take a look at myself as a writer instead of just at words that I have written.

Still Life in Pieces

By

Daniel Gibson

Cast of Characters

<u>CLAIRE:</u>	40s; Addison's adoptive mother
<u>ADDISON:</u>	17; Young and angry
<u>JULIE:</u>	late 30s; Addison's birth mother
<u>SASHA:</u>	17; Addison's friend

Scene 1

ADDISON'S bedroom. The room is filled with art. It's mediocre and angry. Music blares. Addison sits on her bed, flipping through a Playboy magazine, tearing out select pages as she goes. There's a knock at the door. ADDISON doesn't hear it. There's another knock.

CLAIRE

(offstage)

Addison?

ADDISON still doesn't hear. The door opens and CLAIRE enters. ADDISON sees this and hides the magazine.

ADDISON

Jesus, mom!

CLAIRE

Can you turn the music down?

ADDISON

What?

CLAIRE motions "turn the music down, please." ADDISON does.

ADDISON

Would it kill you to knock?

CLAIRE

I did knock.

ADDISON

Usually when people knock on a door, they wait for people to answer.

CLAIRE

Alright, I'm sorry.

Pause.

CLAIRE

And I'm sorry if I...interrupted something.

ADDISON

Oh my god mom, I wasn't masturbating.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE
What were you doing?

ADDISON
Working.

CLAIRE
On a new piece?

ADDISON
What do you want?

CLAIRE
I was hoping we could talk.

ADDISON
Did your shrink put you up to this?

CLAIRE
Dr. Fulton did suggest that I--that we should-

ADDISON
Okay, listen. Can you just keep me out of your whole...thing you got going on? I don't care if you're seeking psychiatric help. Let's face it, you probably need it. Just...leave me out.

CLAIRE
You're welcome to join us if you'd like.

ADDISON
(feigned enthusiasm)
Oh, boy! You mean I'd get to sit on a couch with my adoptive mom and talk about the abandonment issues I must have having parents leave me for the second time? Yeah, no, therapy's not my scene.

Pause. CLAIRE looks around the room and notices the art.

CLAIRE
You've been busy. I haven't seen these ones yet.

ADDISON
Mom-

CLAIRE
I like the colors.

ADDISON
Can you leave?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

I could get you some frames. Hang them up.

ADDISON

I'm not a kindergartner.

CLAIRE

It's good art.

ADDISON

Just stop, okay?

CLAIRE

Stop what?

ADDISON

This stealth bonding shit you're always trying to do.

CLAIRE

Addison, I want you to know that I'm still here. I'll always be here.

ADDISON

I know. That's the problem.

Pause.

ADDISON

And don't call me an artist. That's not what it is.

CLAIRE

What is it?

ADDISON

I don't know. Art is supposed to say something. This obviously doesn't.

Pause.

ADDISON (cont'd)

Did you see it coming?

CLAIRE

See what?

ADDISON

What do you think?

CLAIRE

Honestly? I think I could feel it. But then when it happened, it still felt like it came out of nowhere.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE spots the crate of Playboy magazines at the foot of ADDISON's bed.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Where did you get these?

ADDISON

I found them.

CLAIRE

Why were you going through my things?

ADDISON

These aren't yours.

CLAIRE

They aren't yours.

ADDISON

If they belong to no-one, I'm able to use them.

CLAIRE

Use them for what?

ADDISON

I think I'll put them in my next project. You know what? I even give you permission to get a frame and hang it up in the kitchen, and everyday when you go downstairs to have your cereal and orange juice, you can look at all the women he wished he was fucking.

A pause. ADDISON flops back on her bed and continue to go through the magazine. There's complete silence except for the occasional ripping noise as ADDISON tears out pages.

ADDISON (cont'd)

What do you even talk about? At therapy.

CLAIRE

Me. You. The parts of me I feel like I need to work on.

ADDISON

Do you ever just feel like smashing something?

CLAIRE

Every day.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON

I was looking for the pictures you took down. When I found these? Where did those go?

CLAIRE

I was thinking that we need to take a step back and-

ADDISON

You can't just get rid of him.

CLAIRE

That's not what I'm trying to do. We need to take a while and process this without distractions.

ADDISON

How's that working out for you?

CLAIRE

I know you're angry. At both of us. And I get that you're trying to work this out. But it's okay to ask for help.

ADDISON

I'm going to Sasha's tomorrow.

CLAIRE

Fine.

ADDISON

Can I take your car?

CLAIRE

Yes, just don't...yeah, that's fine.

ADDISON

Cool.

A pause. CLAIRE decides that the conversation has ended. She leaves. ADDISON turns her music back up and gets out her phone. She dials and puts it to her ear.

ADDISON (cont'd)

Hi, Julie?

Scene 2

JULIE's home. A modest, tasteful apartment. Music plays in another room. There's a knock at the door. The music stops. JULIE enters and opens the door, revealing ADDISON.

Addison. JULIE

Hi. ADDISON

Come in, please. JULIE

Thanks. ADDISON

Did you find the place okay? JULIE

Yeah, it was fine. ADDISON

Do you want anything to drink or eat? JULIE

I'm fine, thanks. ADDISON

Do you mind if I go and get my coffee really quick? JULIE

No, go ahead. ADDISON

JULIE leaves, giving ADDISON a moment to look around the apartment. JULIE returns with her coffee. She sits across from ADDISON.

I'm glad you called. JULIE

Yeah, I figured that we'd talked long enough to know you weren't a serial killer or anything. ADDISON

That's always a good first step. JULIE

That kinda came out wrong. ADDISON

Don't worry about it. It's good that you were being careful. JULIE

(CONTINUED)

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7.

ADDISON

I never knew that you lived so close.

JULIE

It's amazing, isn't it? All this time and we were a short drive away.

ADDISON

You have some neat stuff.

JULIE

I work from home. Gives me time to travel.

ADDISON

Have you lived here long?

JULIE

Almost all my life.

Pause.

ADDISON

This is weird, right? Like, how normal this is?

JULIE

What do you mean?

ADDISON

I feel like I should be more nervous than I am. Like at a doctor's office, and you're waiting for them to tell you whether or not you're dying, or something.

Pause.

ADDISON (cont'd)

Oh my god, I sound insane, don't I?

JULIE

It's alright. This is big. It's not everyday you meet your birth mother.

The phrase makes ADDISON uncomfortable. JULIE notices.

ADDISON

Uh-huh.

JULIE

Oh, if you don't want me to use that term-

ADDISON

It's fine. It's just when you say it like that, it's sounds....I don't know....bigger than it really is.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE

Bigger in what way?

ADDISON

Sure, we might share some of the same DNA, but I hardly know you.

JULIE

That's why we decided to meet, isn't it? To get to know each other?

ADDISON

Yeah. I guess what I don't get is what you want out of this.

JULIE

I want to get to know you.

ADDISON

I get that, but...

JULIE

If you're not comfortable with this, we can always wait a bit.

ADDISON

You know what? Forget I said anything. I'm here. We might as well talk.

JULIE

Sure.

Pause.

ADDISON

I'm not even sure what to talk about.

JULIE

How about you tell me about yourself? You're in school.

ADDISON

Yeah, like most seventeen year olds, I am in school.

JULIE

You like your classes?

ADDISON

Some of them. Sometimes.

JULIE

Which ones do you like?

ADDISON thinks.

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON

I like Art. I know it's kind of lame and everyone takes it because it's easy, but it's nice to just sit down and make something.

JULIE

That's great. Are you an artist?

ADDISON

Not really. I mean, I make stuff sometimes, but I wouldn't say I'm an artist.

JULIE

Sounds like something an artist might say.

ADDISON

I swear it's not that good.

JULIE

I'd love to see something of yours sometime.

ADDISON

I don't know...maybe.

JULIE

Think about it.

ADDISON

Okay.

Pause. It's not uncomfortable.

ADDISON (cont'd)

Can I ask you a question. Is that okay?

JULIE

Of course. I'm here for you.

ADDISON

Do you...live alone?

JULIE

If you're asking what I think you're asking, no, your birth father doesn't live here.

ADDISON

Oh.

JULIE

We split up a long time ago. I don't know where he is.

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON

Have you tried to find him online?

JULIE

I'm not sure he's worth the trouble. I can give you his name if you want to try and find him.

ADDISON

No. That's alright. If I'm being honest, I wasn't even sure I wanted to meet you. No offense or anything.

JULIE

Don't worry about it. It's a difficult decision. Though now I'm curious. Why was it that you decided to meet me?

ADDISON

I'm honestly not sure.

JULIE

Would your parents approve of you meeting me?

ADDISON

I really don't care what they think right now.

A quick pause. ADDISON changes the subject.

ADDISON (cont'd)

How long have you known about me? I mean, obviously you've known about me forever, but how long have you know where I was?

JULIE

The day I found out your new name, I reached out to you.

ADDISON

My new name?

JULIE

Well...when you were born, when I had you, I had given you a different name.

ADDISON

Oh.

JULIE

You must've been given the name when you were taken in. I named you Rose.

Pause as the news hits ADDISON.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE (cont'd)

Does your mother know you're here?

ADDISON

I told her I was going to a friends house. She doesn't need to know. At least for right now.

JULIE

I understand.

ADDISON

Thanks.

JULIE

You know, you're not at all what I expected.

ADDISON

Neither are you.

Scene 3

Addison's room. Music blares. Addison sits on her bed, cutting up bits from magazines. There is paper everywhere. She glues the paper bits to a small posterboard. There's a knock. Beat. Addison gets up, turns down her music, and answers the door, revealing SASHA.

SASHA

Okay, what the hell?

ADDISON

Um, hi?

SASHA

Hi. So, What the hell?

ADDISON

What do you mean, "what the hell"?

SASHA

You're serious?

ADDISON

Yeah.

SASHA

Not responding to any of my texts-

I've been busy-

ADDISON

So I have no idea what to tell your mom-

SASHA

Shh, keep it down-

ADDISON

Who's grilling me about some group project I've never heard of-

SASHA

Alright, just...

ADDISON

ADDISON pulls her in and shuts the door.

What did you tell her?

ADDISON (cont'd)

I told her what I knew.

SASHA

Meaning...

ADDISON

You were at my house last night to work on a project for History.

SASHA

Good. Thanks.

ADDISON

You owe me.

SASHA

Sure.

ADDISON

Big time.

SASHA

Yeah, fine, whatever.

ADDISON

I told her we were writing a rap about Grover Cleveland, so don't be surprised if she asks about that.

SASHA

ADDISON

Great, that doesn't sound completely made up.

SASHA

Sorry, I panicked.

ADDISON

So, what's up?

SASHA

I wanted to see if you were okay-

SASHA looks around the room.

SASHA

Which clearly you're not.

ADDISON

I'm fine.

SASHA

This is not the room of an okay person! I'm getting major stalker slash serial killer vibes.

ADDISON

If you're here just to make fun of me-

SASHA

No, no, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I just...what the hell is all this?

ADDISON

Therapy.

In response to SASHA's quizzical look, ADDISON shows her the posterboard.

SASHA

Woah. Flashback to kindergarten.

ADDISON

It's a collage, you dweeb.

SASHA

Call it what you want, it looks like giving up.

ADDISON

Pablo Picasso did collage. He perfected it.

SASHA

May I ask what's with all the naked women?

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON

They were my dad's magazines.

SASHA

Oh.

Pause.

SASHA (cont'd)

You want to talk about it?

ADDISON

Not really.

SASHA

Okay. But I looked up a list of a bunch of famous people who came from broken homes. I thought that would make you feel better.

ADDISON

Oh god, please don't.

SASHA

Selena Gomez, Justin Timberlake, Jennifer Aniston-

ADDISON

Uh-uh, nope, I'm shutting it down.

SASHA

I was just trying to help.

ADDISON

Well don't do it ever again.

Pause.

SASHA

Let's go see a movie.

ADDISON

I'm working.

SASHA

But it's the weekend and I'm bored and there's nothing to do in this suck-ass town.

ADDISON

Sorry.

SASHA

Okay, compromise: We order a pizza, watch movies, and actually hang out instead of lying about it.

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON thinks about it.

ADDISON

Ugh. Fine.

SASHA

Awesome! But we are not listening to this.

SASHA plugs in her phone and her music begins playing.

ADDISON

I got the pizza.

SASHA

Right on.

ADDISON grabs her laptop and begins ordering online. SASHA begins bopping along with the music.

SASHA (cont'd)

Here, use my card.

SASHA hands her debit card to ADDISON and continues dancing.

ADDISON

Toppings?

SASHA

It's all you.

ADDISON

Mushrooms?

SASHA

Ew, no.

ADDISON finishes ordering the pizza.

ADDISON

On its way.

SASHA

What kind did you get?

ADDISON

Extra mushroom.

SASHA

You did not.

ADDISON

Relax, I went with pepperoni.

SASHA

Where were you, by the way? Yesterday? It's okay if you don't want to tell me, but not really 'cause I'm not into being complicit to potentially illegal activity.

ADDISON

I was visiting someone.

SASHA

Boyfriend?

ADDISON

No.

SASHA

Girlfriend?

ADDISON

No.

SASHA

Okay, I give up.

ADDISON

This isn't a guessing game.

SASHA

Oh, come on!

ADDISON

Alright, but you take this to your grave. Promise?

SASHA

Ooh, sounds juicy. Promise.

ADDISON navigates on her laptop.

ADDISON

This lady messaged me on Facebook a few weeks ago.

SASHA

Like just out of the blue?

ADDISON

Yeah, just read.

(CONTINUED)

She hands the laptop to SASHA, who reads. A few moments later, SHE GASPS.

SASHA

Oh my god, shut up...

ADDISON

Yeah.

SASHA

And this is legit, this isn't a joke?

ADDISON

Nope.

SASHA

Oh my god, your birth mother?

ADDISON

Shh! I went to go meet her yesterday.

SASHA

And?

ADDISON

I don't know, it was alright I guess.

SASHA

Did she live up to expectation?

ADDISON

I hadn't really thought about it before.

SASHA

About your birth mother?

ADDISON

I never really cared.

SASHA

You're so lucky! I wished I had two sets of parents.

ADDISON

Is that what you really think this is? Sash, this woman gave me up. She didn't want me. Forgive me for being skeptical.

SASHA

(looking at the laptop)

Who even is this lady?

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON
Dunno. Profile's pretty blank.

SASHA
Does your mom know?

ADDISON
No. And you swore you'd keep it a secret.

SASHA
I will! Jeez, trust me this one time, will you?

ADDISON falls back on her bed in
despair.

ADDISON
My life is fucked.

SASHA
Can't argue with that.

ADDISON
Distract me.

SASHA
With what?

ADDISON
Anything.

SASHA
(continuing her list)
Justin Bieber, Harry Styles, Jamie Lee Curtis-

ADDISON
That's not helping!

SASHA
Here, get up.

ADDISON
What?

SASHA
Get up!

She pulls ADDISON off the bed.

SASHA (cont'd)
Now dance.

ADDISON
I'm not dancing.

SASHA
You asked me to distract you. I'm distracting you.

ADDISON
I'm such a shitty dancer.

SASHA
Then let's worry about your shitty dancing instead of your shitty life. Now move it!

ADDISON
Okay, okay! Jesus.

ADDISON sways, extremely self-conscious.

SASHA
Don't worry about moving, let the music do it for you.

ADDISON begins to get into it. SASHA turns the music up. The two begin dancing, getting more and more wild. The song ends and the next one begins. ADDISON stops. She sits on her bed, panting and laughing. Her breaths become more labored as she begins to hyperventilate.

SASHA (cont'd)
Addi?

ADDISON waves SASHA away and tries to calm herself down. She pounds her fists on her bed and screams into her pillow.

ADDISON
FUCK!

Scene 4

Julie's apartment. JULIE holds one of ADDISON's works of art. She examines it thoughtfully. ADDISON sits across from her, trying not to look like she cares too much about what JULIE thinks.

JULIE
This is great

ADDISON
You think so?

JULIE
It's really impactful. What was the inspiration?

ADDISON
They're all kind of based on how I feel at the time, as cheesy as it sounds.

JULIE
What were you feeling when you made this?

ADDISON
Angry.

JULIE
Does it have a title?

ADDISON
Not really...I think titles kind of ruin art. I don't get how people can sum up a piece of art in a couple of words. It takes away the viewer's ability to just look at a piece for what it is.

JULIE
I'd never thought of that.

ADDISON
I guess I could call it something like "the time I got an F in History" or "The time I found out my parents are getting a divorce," but that feels kinda...

JULIE
Self-indulgent?

ADDISON
Whiny.

JULIE
Are you angry at your parents for getting a divorce?

ADDISON bristles. She hasn't talked about his with JULIE yet.

ADDISON
Who else am I going to be angry at?

JULIE

Your mother loves you very much, Addison. You know that, right?

ADDISON

Of course I know. It's just...I'm not stupid, I know that this happens. It happens a lot, but when it happens to you...

JULIE

Do you talk to your father much?

ADDISON

No. And I really wouldn't care if I never did.

JULIE

Divorce is a complicated matter. You have to remind yourself that they have their own reasons for doing it.

ADDISON

Okay, but like, what do you know? Sorry, but your husband or boyfriend or whatever left you when you were still young. You didn't have to grow up and watch everything you know just fall to shit.

JULIE

Maybe not, but I knew full well what it was like to give up something because I knew that it would only end in disaster. Addison, I can't say I made a mistake when I gave you up because I knew I wouldn't be able to give you a life that any child deserved.

ADDISON

You thought I would be better off in the foster care system?

JULIE

But you were adopted by two people who loved you so very much.

ADDISON

Yeah, because I was lucky. If I were still in the system, would you have still tried to contact me?

JULIE

Of course.

ADDISON

Really? Because I'm not so sure.

JULIE

We can talk about "what ifs" all day. What matters is that we're here. I found you. After all this time, we're together again.

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON

But why now? After all this time, why now?

JULIE

I couldn't live with myself if I didn't know you were okay.

ADDISON

And now that you know?

JULIE

What do you mean?

ADDISON

What's the endgame? Do you think I can just squeeze you into my life and pretend that this isn't weird? This is weird!

JULIE

What's weird about it. I want to be a part of my daughter's life.

ADDISON

It's weird because I'm *not your daughter*. You're essentially a complete stranger to me. No matter how much we talk about our lives or school or hobbies, that's not going to change.

JULIE

These things take time. We just need to keep seeing each other-

ADDISON

It's not your decision anymore. You gave that up when you gave me up.

JULIE

Then I ask for your forgiveness.

ADDISON

It's not your fault. People leave. That's just what people do. And they try and come back and they see that everything's changed. It's gone on without them. They don't realize that leaving changes everything.

JULIE

It doesn't have to.

ADDISON

It doesn't have to, but it does.

Pause.

ADDISON (cont'd)

I think I should go.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE

Here, I found this. I thought you might want it.

JULIE digs out a piece of paper and hands it to ADDISON.

ADDISON

What is it?

JULIE

Your birth certificate.

ADDISON looks at the certificate.

ADDISON

(reading)

"Rose Margaret Winslow".

JULIE

Look at you. My baby girl. I'm so sorry.

ADDISON

(handing the certificate back)

I can't take this.

JULIE

Please.

ADDISON

It belongs to someone else.

JULIE

It belongs to my daughter.

ADDISON hesitates. She has no idea what to do or say. She folds the certificate and puts it in her pocket. She goes for the door.

JULIE (cont'd)

Can I see you again?

ADDISON

We'll see.

JULIE

Addison, your mother loves you very much. Please remember that.

ADDISON looks back one more time, then leaves.

Scene 5

Addison's room. Addison sits on her bed, doing homework. A knock at the door.

ADDISON

Come in.

CLAIRE enters. She carries a picture in a frame.

CLAIRE

Here. The rest are in my room. You can have them if you want. Hang them up. Do whatever you want.

ADDISON

You don't have to do this.

CLAIRE

I know. But I figured if we're going to have to get through this, we might as well be truthful about it. Full disclosure.

ADDISON doesn't know how to respond to this.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

It's fine if you're not ready to talk about it. But I'm here when you are. Feel free to ask me anything.

ADDISON

Thanks.

CLAIRE goes to leave.

ADDISON (cont'd)

Mom?

CLAIRE

Yeah.

ADDISON

I'm sorry.

CLAIRE

I know.

ADDISON

I think I might need to go to therapy or something.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

And there's nothing wrong with that.

ADDISON

And if you still need some time without the pictures, I get it.

CLAIRE

(with a faint smile)

I actually hid them because of you.

(off of ADDISON's look)

You were so angry. And I wanted to help you so badly. But I was so afraid. Afraid the you would hurt yourself or break something. I wasn't hiding these for me. I was hiding them from you. I knew what you would've done to them. It's not your fault, it's just how you've learned to deal with things. You destroy things and put them back together in a way that you can understand. But you also have such fearlessness and I wish that was something I could've learned from you.

ADDISON

I don't feel too fearless nowadays.

CLAIRE

That's okay. That's what I'm here for. I love you so much.

ADDISON

I love you too.

They embrace. ADDISON gets an idea. She grabs some of her art and throws it on the bed.

ADDISON (cont'd)

Here.

ADDISON gives CLAIRE one of her art pieces.

CLAIRE

What's this for?

ADDISON

Therapy.

As a demonstration, ADDISON picks up another artwork and tears it to shreds.

CLAIRE

Oh no, don't do that!

(CONTINUED)

If you won't, I will.

ADDISON

She tears another one.

It's all trash anyways.

ADDISON (cont'd)

CLAIRE looks at the art in her hands. Something clicks. She rips it up.

That felt pretty good.

CLAIRE

Sometimes you just need to destroy something, right?

ADDISON

She hands her mother another piece. They rip up the angry artwork and throw the pieces in the air. Caught up in the action, CLAIRE picks up the framed picture and hurls it against the wall, destroying it. They both freeze, completely startled.

Mom?

ADDISON (cont'd)

It's fine. Watch your feet.

CLAIRE

CLAIRE begins picking up pieces of glass.

Here, let me help.

ADDISON

It's alright, I've got it. Here, take this.

CLAIRE

CLAIRE hands ADDISON the photograph that was in the frame. ADDISON takes it and sits on the bed.

(looking at the photo)
It's almost creepy how happy we look.

ADDISON

It's always easy to judge the past based on what we know now. But I think we were happy back then.

CLAIRE

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON

Did you two know back then?

CLAIRE

There might've been little hints here and there. But we kept on smiling.

ADDISON

Are you two like mortal enemies now?

CLAIRE

No, I wouldn't say that. We had waited so long that we got impatient, forgot that we wanted it to be amicable.

ADDISON

Why did you wait so long? It was me, wasn't it?

CLAIRE

It wasn't you.

ADDISON

It was totally me.

CLAIRE

It was partially you. But mostly it was the fear that once we ended it, we'd have to start over. And then I saw that I was starting to lose you too and I panicked.

ADDISON

Well I'm back.

CLAIRE

Glad to hear it.

Pause as ADDISON debates whether to share this or not.

ADDISON

Mom, there's something I really need to tell you. Like really badly.

CLAIRE

What is it? Is everything alright?

ADDISON

I'm not sure.

ADDISON takes out the folded birth certificate and hands it to CLAIRE.

CLAIRE

What's this?

(CONTINUED)

Full disclosure.

ADDISON

Scene 6

Night. Julie's apartment. There's a knock on the door. JULIE enters in a robe and answers the door, revealing CLAIRE.

CLAIRE

She told me everything.

JULIE

Maybe you should come in.

CLAIRE enters and JULIE closes the door behind her. She turns to face CLAIRE without saying a word.

CLAIRE

Are you going to say something?

JULIE

Please, have a seat.

CLAIRE

How long have you been talking to her?

JULIE

About two months. Do you want some wine? I want some wine.

CLAIRE

Julie, please, just talk to me.

JULIE

If you'r trying to get me to admit to a mistake, I'm not going to. You had no right keeping her away from me.

CLAIRE

We agreed that contact would be made when she was ready.

JULIE

She was ready! She wanted to meet. I didn't force her to do anything she didn't want to.

CLAIRE

It wasn't the right time. She wasn't ready.

JULIE

That's why I reached out the way I did.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE
Julia Winslow?

JULIE
It was my married name.

CLAIRE
I thought you weren't married.

JULIE
Not long enough to matter.

CLAIRE
Dr. Fulton-

JULIE
Just call me Julie. We're way past a healthy doctor patient relationship.

CLAIRE
If she were to find out that we knew about each other-

JULIE
I acted alone. The onus is on me. Isn't that what you wanted?

CLAIRE
Of course not.

JULIE
She's an amazing woman, Claire.

CLAIRE
I know.

JULIE
I would give anything to talk to her again.

CLAIRE
We'll see.

JULIE
That's exactly what she said.

CLAIRE
Why did you do it?

JULIE
I'd waited so long. I just wanted her to know that I was here, that I hadn't forgotten about her?

CLAIRE

Would it have been so bad to let her believe that you had?

JULIE

I wouldn't be able to live with that guilt.

CLAIRE

This isn't about you, Julie. Then you should have just kept your distance.

JULIE

And just what was I supposed to think when you showed up at my door-

CLAIRE

That wasn't an invitation-

JULIE

Needing someone you could talk to-

CLAIRE

It was strictly professional, I needed help-

JULIE

Professional? The woman raising my daughter needs my help-

CLAIRE

You gave her up! We all have to live with our choices, good and bad. DNA doesn't make up for accountability.

JULIE

I'm different than I was, I'd be able to care for her.

CLAIRE

She doesn't need a caretaker. She needs someone who she knows will be there when she needs it.

JULIE

Bring her to therapy. It would be strictly professional.

CLAIRE

We've crossed a line we can't uncross, Julie. We have to take a step back and reassess. That's what you're always telling me, isn't it?

JULIE

You think we could ever get back to-

CLAIRE

It'll take time.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE
I know.

CLAIRE
It's all up to Addison.

JULIE
Of course. And you'll tell her about us?

CLAIRE
Eventually. For now, you need to keep your distance.

JULIE
I really am sorry, Claire.

CLAIRE
I know. And you're going to have to live with that.

Pause.

JULIE
Where do we go from here?

CLAIRE
I don't know.

They sit in silence for a few moments.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
I think I'd like that wine now.

Scene 7

A park. ADDISON and SASHA lie in the grass looking up at the sky.

SASHA
Anything?

ADDISON
Not yet.

They continue looking in silence.

ADDISON (cont'd)
Hey, do you think we-

SASHA
Shh. No talk, only look.

ADDISON rolls her eyes and continues looking. SASHA suddenly points up into the sky.

(CONTINUED)

There!

Where?

To the left.

My left or your left?

My left!

I don't see it.

Look, it's like an upside-down ice cream cone. Seriously, have you never seen a dick before?

There it is, I see it!

Ten points to me!

Oh, vagina cloud!

Nice! Fifty points!

So what's the score again?

I don't know, I haven't been keeping track. Let's call it a draw.

Sure.

Pause.

SASHA (cont'd)

ADDISON

ADDISON cranes her neck to look.

SASHA

ADDISON

SASHA

ADDISON

SASHA

ADDISON

SASHA

They go back to watching.

ADDISON

(pointing to the sky)

SASHA

ADDISON

SASHA

ADDISON laughs.

ADDISON

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

SASHA

So, I know we aren't talking about "you-know who"...

ADDISON

No, we are not.

SASHA

But say, hypothetically, someone were to ask about "you-know-who"...

ADDISON

Uh-huh...

SASHA

What would you say...in the hypothetical situation?

ADDISON

Hypothetically, I'd say that it's none of your hypothetical business.

SASHA

Fair. That's fair.

ADDISON

Life goes on.

SASHA

But do you ever catch yourself thinking about what your life may have been like if like one major thing changed?

ADDISON

Why, do you?

SASHA

Sometimes. Like if my parents decided to move to California when I was little, I'd probably know how to surf, or like sushi.

ADDISON

Umm, okay.

SASHA

That was a lame example, you get my point.

ADDISON

Yeah, I do.

SASHA

So what do you think about?

ADDISON

I think about what it would've been like if my parents didn't divorce. We probably would've been miserable.

(CONTINUED)

SASHA
You think?

ADDISON
For sure. I think about what might've happened if I never met "you-know-who".

SASHA
Do you ever think about what if she never-

ADDISON
No, I don't. At least I try not to.

SASHA
Why not?

ADDISON
It doesn't matter.

Pause.

SASHA
God, the sun feels so good.

ADDISON
Yeah.

SASHA
I just want to lie here forever.

ADDISON
Wait, do you smell that?

SASHA
What?

ADDISON
It smells like dog poo.

SASHA freaks out and jumps up.

SASHA
Oh my god, eww! No no no please oh god where is it?!

ADDISON is beside herself in laughter.

SASHA (cont'd)
Oh my god, I can't believe you just did that! You freaking asshole!

(CONTINUED)

ADDISON
Sorry, couldn't resist.

SASHA
When did you get a sense of humor?

ADDISON
No idea. Do you like it?

SASHA
Not if it's going to be like that all the time!

ADDISON
Only sometimes, I promise.

SASHA
God, I need to stretch my legs. You wanna take a walk?

ADDISON
Go ahead. I'll catch up.

SASHA exits. ADDISON takes a photo out of her pocket. It's the photo her mother gave her. She looks at it. It's a beautiful day. She almost looks happy.

END OF PLAY